



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release

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Women Encouraged to Recognize and Take Steps to Prevent Heart Disease
February 3^d is National "Wear Red Day"

MADISON – Today is national "Wear Red Day" – a day dedicated to raising awareness that heart disease is the number one killer of women in America. Wisconsin health officials encourage women to maintain a healthy diet and exercise on a regular basis to help prevent and control cardiovascular disease.

"People tend to think heart disease as primarily affecting older people or men," said Dr. Sheri Johnson, State Health Officer. "The reality is that for the past 10 years in Wisconsin, more women than men have died from heart disease."

In 2004, nearly 5,919 Wisconsin women died from heart disease. In 2003, that number was 6,213. According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease kills nearly half a million women a year – about one per minute – and one in four females and one in four males in the U.S. suffers from a form of heart disease.

The most common symptom of a heart attack is chest pain or discomfort, but women are more likely to experience some other symptoms such as shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Family history and age can affect your risk of heart disease, but lifestyle changes may reduce the risk for women. To help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease:

- **Get moving.** Try to get 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most days of the week, even if you do it 10 minutes at a time. Being overweight or obese causes many preventable deaths.
- **Eat healthy.** Choose a diet low in fat, sodium, and cholesterol that includes whole grains and at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- **Stop smoking.** Your risk of heart disease starts to drop as soon as you stop smoking and is cut in half after just one year without smoking, regardless of how long or how much you smoked. If you need help quitting, call the toll-free Wisconsin Tobacco Quitline at 1-877-270-7867.
- **Know your numbers.** Ask your health care professional to check your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Work with them to improve any numbers that are not normal.

To learn more about the Department's cardiovascular disease prevention and control efforts in Wisconsin, visit <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/cardiovascular>.

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